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## Artist Profile

### Sheree Kern – Creating is Calming

Air Force veteran Sheree Kern loves crafts. She works on at least one new project each week, from leatherwork to ceramics to sun-catchers. She's pretty good at it, too. In fact, Kern won first place in the national art competition in the Suncatcher/Sand Art Kit category, for her work titled "Proud as a Peacock." That's how she earned her invitation to the 2008 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Riverside, California in October 2008.

"Crafts help keep me calm and focused," said Kern. "Doing crafts makes me concentrate, and that helps me maintain my health." The national competition in which she earned her first place award was the only time she had ever entered her work into a contest. Winning was exciting for Kern.

"Getting recognition for what I do is nice," she said. "I think the Creative Arts Festival is one of the greatest things VA has ever done for veterans. It gives us the chance to meet other people with interests similar to our own, and it helps us explore things we didn't know we could do."

Kern has many interests other than crafts. She also loves baseball—watching it, anyway. A bad back keeps her away from many strenuous activities, but she enjoys getting exercise by swimming. She also likes to go camping and play bingo in her home town of Martinsburg, W. Va., but mostly she does crafts. She can hardly wait to get to California to experience her first National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

"Being invited to participate in the Festival has given me such joy," said Kern. A little taste of success has also proven to be a good motivator for this talented veteran. "In the future—the far future—I would like to open up my own craft store and sell my art," she said. One thing is for certain, she has found the right place for encouragement. The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is a great place to cultivate ambitious dreams, in the company of fellow veterans whose multitude of talents extend far into the artistic side of life.